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Lebanon

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SUMMARY

The United States and Lebanon continue to enjoy good relations. Prominent current issues between the United States and Lebanon include progress toward a Lebanon-Israel peace treaty, U.S. aid to Lebanon, and Lebanon's capacity to stop Hizballah militia attacks on Israel. The United States supports Lebanon's independence and favored the end of Israeli and Syrian occupation of parts of Lebanon. Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon on May 23, 2000, and Syria completed withdrawing its forces on April 26, 2005.

A large Lebanese-American community follows U.S.-Lebanon relations closely. Presidents Eisenhower and Reagan said the United States had "vital" interests in Lebanon, but others might describe U.S. interests in Lebanon as less than vital. At the invitation of the Lebanese government, the United States intervened in Lebanon to defend Lebanese sovereignty in 1958 and 1982. In a Beirut terror bombing in October 1983, 241 U.S. armed forces personnel died. From 1987 until July 1997, the United States banned travel to Lebanon because of the threat of kidnaping and dangers from the ongoing civil war.

Lebanon is rebuilding after the 1975-1990 civil war. According to estimates, more than 100,000 people died and another 900,000 were displaced during the 16 years of civil strife. Syrian armed forces, invited into Lebanon in 1976 to prevent a Muslim attack on the Christians, continued to occupy the northern and eastern parts of the country until April 2005. Israeli forces invaded southern Lebanon in 1982 and occupied a 9-mile-wide strip along the Israel-Lebanon border until May 2000.

Lebanon's government is based in part on a 1943 agreement that called for a Maronite Christian President, a Sunni Muslim Prime Minister, and a Shi'ite Muslim Speaker of the National Assembly, and stipulated that the National Assembly seats and civil service jobs be distributed according to a ratio of 6 Christians to 5 Muslims. On August 21, 1990, the Lebanon National Assembly adopted the "Taif" reforms (named after the Saudi Arabian city where they were negotiated). The parliament was increased to 128 to be divided evenly between Christians and Muslim-Druze, presidential authority was decreased, and the Speaker's and the Prime Minister's authority was increased. President Ilyas Hirawi signed the constitutional amendment implementing the reforms on September 21, 1990.

Lebanon held elections for the National Assembly in 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2005 for a new National Assembly. The National Assembly elected Emile Lahoud President on October 15, 1998, and extended his term for three years by a constitutional amendment in September 2004. The assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, who opposed Lahoud's extension, sparked a political crisis, realignments in Lebanon's domestic politics, and withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon.

Other CRS reports on Lebanon include CRS Issue Brief IB92075, *Syria: U.S. Relations and Bilateral Issues.*

MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

On May 23, the U.N. Secretary General reported that a U.N. team had found no remaining Syrian military forces, assets, or intelligence apparatus in Lebanese territory, except for one Syrian battalion deployed near a disputed border village. On June 10, following accusations of Syrian involvement in the murder of an anti-Syrian Lebanese journalist, the U.N. Secretary General announced that he was sending the verification team back to Lebanon to see if Syrian intelligence agents were still in the country.

Supporters of an anti-Syrian bloc gained a majority of 72 seats in Lebanon's 128-member parliament as a result of parliamentary elections held during the period May 28 to June 19, 2005; a pro-Syrian was re-elected speaker of parliament, but an anti-Syrian was appointed prime minister. The new cabinet received a vote of confidence on July 30, 2005, gaining 92 votes out of the 128-member Lebanese parliament, with 14 opposed, 2 abstaining, and 20 absentees.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

United States and Lebanon

U.S. Interests

Two U.S. presidents have described Lebanon as of vital interest to the United States. On July 15, 1958, President Eisenhower told Congress that he had deployed U.S. Armed Forces to assist the Lebanese army in maintaining order in the face of a possible internal rebellion because Lebanon had "...been deemed vital to United States national interests and world peace." (Public Papers of the Presidents, 1958, p. 550-551) On October 24, 1983, the day after 241 U.S. Armed Forces personnel were killed by a terrorist bombing in Beirut, President Reagan said "...We have vital interests in Lebanon... ." (Public Papers of the Presidents, 1983, vol. II, p. 1501) Some would agree that a friendly and independent Lebanon is "vital" to U.S. interests. But others might disagree and suggest that the Eisenhower and Reagan comments reflected the crisis atmospheres in which they acted and that U.S.-Lebanon ties are more cultural than strategic.

The U.S. interests to which the two Presidents referred do not include conditions often associated with "vital" interests: the tangible ties of military bases, oil fields, international waterways, industrial strength, major trading ties, or allied military might. Rather, U.S. interests in Lebanon stem from the ties of the Lebanese-American community (a majority of Arab-Americans are of Lebanese origin), Lebanon's pro- Western (and during the "cold war" anti-communist) orientation, U.S.-Lebanon cultural ties dating back to the early 19th century, Lebanon's requests for U.S. assistance against stronger regional neighbors, Lebanon's democratic and Christian experience, and Lebanon's role as a frequent interlocutor among the Arab nations.

Maintaining Lebanon's independence is a primary U.S. interest. The United States has opposed and continues to oppose foreign occupation of Lebanon, including the Israeli

occupation of south Lebanon from June 1982 to May 2000, the autonomous actions of the Palestinian guerrilla movement from the early 1970s through 1982, and the Syrian occupation from 1975 to 2005. The United States also is concerned that lingering Iranian influence among anti-Israeli guerrillas and Hizballah, the Lebanese Shi'ite Muslim militia and political movement, will diminish Lebanon's independence.

U.S. Policy Toward Lebanon

The United States has enjoyed good diplomatic relations with Lebanon and has supported Lebanon's political independence. In July 1958, the United States sent 14,300 U.S. Army and Marine personnel to Lebanon to support the government in resisting a radical seizure of the country. During the civil war period beginning in 1975, the United States expressed its concern over the fighting, violence, and destruction of the country, and provided emergency economic aid for the Lebanese people and military training and equipment for the Lebanese Armed Forces. The United States supported the various efforts to arrange cease-fires to end the civil war. U.S. Ambassador Philip Habib's peace mission following the 1982 Israeli invasion ended one phase of the fighting and led to the Israeli withdrawal. As a part of the withdrawal agreement, the United States sent 2,000 Marines to join the French, Italian, and British contingents in the MultiNational Force (MNF). Secretary of State George Shultz negotiated a peace agreement between Lebanon and Israel in May 1983, but the agreement was abrogated by Lebanon in March 1984 under Syrian and internal Lebanese pressure.

In October 1989, the United States supported the Arab League-sponsored Taif meeting (see *The "Taif" Reforms, 1989*, below) and supported the governmental reforms, disarming the militias, and the withdrawal of foreign forces incorporated in the Taif agreement. The United States encouraged Lebanon's participation in the 1991 Madrid peace conference and in the subsequent negotiations (although Lebanon acceded to Syrian pressure and has not participated in the continuing multilateral and bilateral talks). The United States is a member of the five nation force monitoring compliance with the April 26, 1996 Israeli-Hizballah agreement to avoid civilians and limit the Israeli-Hizballah confrontation to military targets. The agreement was negotiated by the United States.

Earlier U.S.-Lebanon Issues

The United States has encouraged the reconciliation and rebuilding of Lebanon since the 1990 end of the 15-year civil war. There have several other issues between the United States and Lebanon, in addition to rebuilding.

The Syrian Presence. The United States long has opposed the continuing Syrian presence in Lebanon. Following the February 14, 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, both President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice have repeated the U.S. insistence that Syria withdraw its troops from Lebanon. Under domestic Lebanese and international pressure, Syria withdrew its forces in March and April 2005 (see "Foreign Presence in Lebanon," below).

Peace Process. The United States favors a Lebanon-Israel peace treaty. Both Lebanon and Israel agreed to a peace settlement in May 1983, under the tutelage of U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, but Lebanon later abrogated the agreement under Syrian

pressure. Lebanon participated in the Madrid peace conference in October 1991, but it was widely understood that Lebanon and Israel would not sign a peace agreement unless and until Syria and Israel had resolved their differences. Israel and Lebanon accept their common boundary drawn by the French and British in 1922-1923. The primary issue separating Israel and Lebanon had been the 1982 Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Israel withdrew in May 2000 from all of Lebanon except for a small disputed enclave called the Shib'a Farms, which some maps place in Lebanon and others place in the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights territory. (See CRS Report RL31078, *The Shib'a Farms Dispute and its Implications*.)

Lebanon-Israel Border Clashes. The Lebanon-Israel border has been the scene of frequent incidents between the Israeli Defense Forces and the Israeli-supported militia, the South Lebanon Army, on one side and various Lebanese and Palestinian militias on the other side. In the past, the clashes usually involved Lebanese or Palestinian rockets launched at Israeli towns, shooting incidents that targeted Israeli military installations or patrols, mines set along roadsides that were triggered as Israeli vehicles passed, and infiltration attempts. The Israelis launched artillery, aerial, or naval bombardments and armored incursions at suspected guerrilla strongholds. Often, civilians on both sides were the targets of the attacks. The most recent Israeli-Lebanese exchanges have involved Hizballah rocket attacks on Israeli posts near Shib'a farms and Israeli air and artillery attacks on Hizballah sites and Lebanese villages (Hizballah is a predominantly Shi'ite Muslim militia and political party).

The Travel Ban. On July 1, 1985, following the hijacking of TWA flight 847 one month earlier, President Ronald Reagan issued Executive Determination 85-14 prohibiting U.S. airlines from flying to Lebanon, prohibiting airlines from ticketing passengers to Lebanon, and prohibiting Lebanese aircraft from landing in the United States. On January 28, 1987, following the kidnapping of three U.S. citizens and one U.S. resident alien, Secretary of State George Shultz banned U.S. citizens from traveling to Lebanon. On 25 October 1995, the United States reversed one of the 1985 prohibitions, and allowed U.S. citizens with waivers to purchase airline tickets to Lebanon. Upon application, the Department of State could waive the ban and allow U.S. citizens to travel to Lebanon if the applicants were journalists, Red Cross workers, visiting critically ill family members, or pursuing U.S. national interests.

On July 30, 1997, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright announced that the travel ban would not be extended for another six months. U.S. citizens using U.S. passports were free to travel to Lebanon. On June 19, 1998, President Clinton lifted the airline ticket ban, allowing persons in the United States to purchase airline tickets to Beirut. The ban on U.S. airlines flying to Beirut and on Lebanese airlines flying to the United States remains in force.

Other Events in U.S.-Lebanon Relations. On April 18, 1983, a truck bomb destroyed the U.S. Embassy in west Beirut, killing 63 people, 17 of whom were U.S. citizens, and wounding another 100 people, 40 of whom were U.S. citizens. On October 23, 1983, a truck bomb killed 220 U.S. Marine, 18 U.S. Navy, and 3 U.S. Army personnel in a Beirut airport building used as U.S. MNF headquarters and barracks. On December 12, 1983, a truck bomb exploded in the U.S. embassy compound in Kuwait, killing 6 people, none of them U.S. citizens. The incident appeared to be related to the U.S. presence in Lebanon. In February 1984, the MNF, including the U.S. contingent, left Beirut because it became obvious that Lebanon's government was not able to extend its control over Lebanese affairs.

During the 16-month tour, 265 members of the U.S. MNF contingent were killed. The United States lost prestige in the Middle East because many Arabs believed the United States abandoned its commitment to Lebanon by withdrawing the MNF before the Lebanese government was ready to assert its authority over the country. On September 20, 1984, a truck bomb killed 20 people, 2 of whom were U.S. military personnel, at the U.S. Embassy annex in Awkar, north-east of Beirut.

In addition, between 1982 and 1988, 18 U.S. citizens were kidnapped and held hostage, most of them by pro-Iranian Lebanese. Fifteen of the U.S. hostages escaped or were released, and 3, Peter Kilburn, William Higgins, and William Buckley, were killed while in captivity.

Recent and Current U.S. Assistance to Lebanon

In December 1996, the United States organized a Friends of Lebanon conference, which resulted in a U.S. commitment of $60 million in U.S. aid to Lebanon over a five-year period beginning in FY1997 and ending in FY2001, i.e., $12 million per year mainly in Economic Support Funds (ESF). Congress increased this amount to $15 million in FY2000 and $35 million in FY2001, reportedly to help Lebanon adjust to new conditions following Israel's withdrawal and cope with continuing economic strains. U.S. economic aid to Lebanon has hovered around $35 million in subsequent years.

The Bush Administration requested $35 million in ESF and $700,000 in International Military Education and Training (IMET) for FY2006. H.R 3057 (the foreign operations appropriations bill for FY2006), which was passed by the House on June 28, 2005, raises the requested ESF amount from $35 million to $40 million, of which $6 million is to be devoted to scholarships and U.S. educational institutions in Lebanon. The Senate version of H.R. 3057, reported on June 30, contained $35 million in ESF, of which $4 million is for educational institutions. During floor debate on July 19, however, the Senate adopted Amendment 1298, which increased ESF to Lebanon by $5 million and provided that an additional $2 million of these funds would be available for scholarships and educational institutions, thereby aligning the Senate figures with those of the House bill. The Senate passed its version of the bill on July 20. (See **Table 2**, below.)

According to the Administration's original planning (based on $35 million in ESF), ESF for Lebanon in FY2006 is targeted toward three main objectives: economic growth, agriculture, and trade ($22 million); promoting democracy and good governance ($7 million); and protection of the environment ($6 million). IMET programs are designed to increase military professionalism among Lebanese Armed Forces personnel, reduce sectarianism in a major national institution, foster personal working relationships with U.S. military personnel, and offer an alternative to training conducted by Syria and other countries less amenable to U.S. democratic ideals. IMET-funded maritime training will emphasize port security and search and rescue operations.

Role of Congress

On July 1, 1993, the U.S. Senate passed by voice vote S.Con.Res. 28, which stated that Syria had violated the Taif Agreements (see below) by not withdrawing from Lebanon in

September 1992, urged an immediate Syrian withdrawal, and called upon the President to continue withholding aid and support for Syria.

The House of Representatives added an amendment to the State Department Authorization bill, Section 863 of H.R. 1646, in mid-May 2001, which would have cut $600,000 in International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds to Lebanon unless Lebanon deployed its armed forces to the border with Israel. Section 863 also called upon the President to present a plan to Congress to cut ESF funds if Lebanon did not deploy within six months.

Section 1224 of P.L. 107-228, the Security Assistance Act of 2002, stated that $10 million of the funds available for FY2003 and subsequent years could not be obligated until the President certified to Congress that Lebanese Armed Forces had deployed to the internationally recognized Lebanon-Israel border and that Lebanon was asserting its authority over the border area. The amendment (popularly called the "Lantos Amendment" after its initial sponsor) was added to compel Lebanon to exercise control over the border area, displacing Hizballah forces. Lebanon refused to move to the border until Israel evacuated the Shib'a Farms disputed area. As of March 2004, Lebanese forces had not moved into the border area. According to unconfirmed sources, the $10 million was held in an escrow account pending negotiations among the United States, Israel, Lebanon, and Members of Congress.

On December 12, 2003, President Bush signed H.R. 1828 (P.L. 108-175), which directs the President to apply economic and diplomatic sanctions to Syria if Syria does not offer an immediate commitment to withdraw from Lebanon. H.R. 1828 also calls upon the Lebanese armed forces to occupy all areas of Lebanon. Lebanon has refused to send its forces along the southern border with Israel until Israel withdraws from the Shib'a farms area.

Lebanon's Political Profile

The "National Covenant," an unwritten agreement negotiated among Lebanese political leaders in 1943, provided for the President to be a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister to be a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies (renamed the National Assembly in 1979) to be a Shi'ite Muslim. The National Covenant also provided that parliament seats and civil service jobs be distributed on the basis of 6 Christians to 5 Muslims (including Druze, a separate religious group often associated with Islam). The President usually selects cabinet ministers to reflect the balance among Lebanon's religious communities distributing the portfolios among the Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Sunni, Shia, and Druze. The Christian-to-Muslim job ratio and the confessional assignment of government positions was based on the population as determined in the 1932 census.

According to the 1926 constitution, the people elect the parliament, the parliament elects a President, and the President selects a Prime Minister and between 18 and 25 members of the cabinet, which then must receive a vote of confidence from the parliament. The President, serving a six-year, non-renewable term, does not have to win votes of confidence. The President may propose laws, is responsible for implementing laws, but may

delay implementing laws passed by parliament by demanding additional debate, adjourning parliament, or calling for new elections.

National Assembly deputies are elected for four-year terms representing electoral districts. The total number and religious affiliations of deputies from each district are determined by the population of the district. All voters vote for all candidates regardless of the voter's or the candidate's religion. The National Assembly elected in 1972 was composed of 53 Christians, 45 Muslim and Druze, and 1 to represent other minorities. The civil war that began in 1975 delayed the 1976 election until August/September 1992, after the reallocation of parliamentary seats by religious affiliation. The current National Assembly, elected in May/June 2005, is composed of 64 Christians and 64 Muslims (including Sunnis, Shi'ites, Druze, and Alawites – another small sect often associated with Islam).

Civil War, 1975-1990

A 1975 Christian attack on a Palestinian refugee community triggered the 15-year civil war. At stake in the civil war was control over the political process and the opportunity to dictate the permanent form of Lebanon's government. The Lebanese government requested Syrian forces in 1976 to protect the rightist/Christian enclave from being overrun by leftist/Muslim forces. Later, the Arab League approved the Syrian intervention, and armed forces from several Arab states joined the Syrians in the Arab League's "Arab Deterrent Force." The others withdrew by the late 1980s, and only the Syrian force remains in Lebanon today. The fighting involved several political party militias, the Lebanese Armed Forces (the government army), and many of the Palestinian guerrilla groups. Lebanese militias tied to political parties or to ethnic-religious factions fought among themselves for dominance over their wing of the political spectrum, and then led their amalgamated force against the other political forces within Lebanon. For example, the militia of the Maronite Christian Phalange party dominated by the Jumayyil family, defeated its fellow Maronite and conservative rival the National Liberal party led by the Shamun family in 1980. The two armies then joined forces against common foes. Or in another example, the leftist Shi'ite Muslim Hizballah defeated another leftist Shia Muslim group, the Amal party, in early 1989. Later, Hizballah and Amal formed a political alliance to run in the 1992 elections.

From 1975 to 1990, the civil war killed approximately 100,000, wounded 200,000, left another 100,000 permanently disabled, and left as many as 900,000 homeless at one time or another during the 16-year war. (There are no accurate data, no breakdown by year, community, sex, etc., for the casualties.) Damage to Beirut and other cities is estimated in the billions of dollars.

The "Taif" Reforms, 1989

On August 18, 1988, the Lebanese National Assembly did not muster the 51-member quorum needed to elect a successor to President Amin Jumayyil, whose six-year term expired on September 23, 1988. With no agreement on a successor a few moments before his term expired on September 23, 1988, outgoing President Jumayyil appointed Army Commander-in-Chief General Michel Awn to be the prime minister. Muslims and Druze refused to serve in the Awn cabinet because Awn was a Christian (a transgression of the National Covenant, which called for a Sunni Prime Minister) and because the existing

cabinet, under Sunni Muslim Prime Minister Salim al-Huss, had not resigned. Al-Huss appointed General Sami al-Khatib to be the interim Lebanon Armed Forces (LAF) Commander-in-Chief. Similarly, on October 18, 1988, the National Assembly failed to elect a new Speaker, who would preside over the Assembly session that would elect a new president. Thus, by the end of 1988, Lebanon had no President, two Prime Ministers and two cabinets, two army Commanders-in-Chief and a divided army, a National Assembly 13 years overdue for elections, two interim speakers but no permanent speaker of the National Assembly, and no immediate prospect of reconvening the parliament for an attempt to resolve the situation. The government was in a stalemate.

In September 1989, after nine months of consultations, an Arab League committee secured a cease-fire and an agreement for a National Assembly meeting to be held in Taif, Saudi Arabia, to discuss governmental reforms. On September 30, 1989, 62 members of the Lebanese parliament met in Taif to begin discussions of government reforms. On October 22, 1989, the Deputies agreed to a reform plan that raised the number of seats in the National Assembly from 99 up to 108, evenly divided between Christians and Muslim/Druze, left appointment of the Prime Minister to the parliament, called for disbanding and disarming the militias, and included a statement that Syria would begin troop withdrawal discussions within two years. The National Assembly Deputies elected a new Speaker, Husayn al-Husayni, and President, Rene Muawwad, and approved the reform package on November 5, 1989, at a meeting in al-Qulayat in north Lebanon. On November 20, 1989, President Muawwad appointed Salim al-Huss to be Prime Minister, and named a 14-member cabinet. On November 22, 1989, President Muawwad was assassinated by a car bomb as he left Lebanese Independence Day ceremonies in West Beirut. On November 24, the Deputies met in Shtawra to elect Ilyas al-Hirawi as the new President. Al-Hirawi named Salim al-Huss to be the Prime Minister and General Emile Lahud to be Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief. Awn, besieged at the Presidential palace, refused to recognize the new President.

On August 21, 1990, 48 of 51 National Assembly deputies meeting in Beirut approved the Taif reforms. President Hirawi signed the constitutional amendment on September 21, 1990, implementing the reforms, but many Christian leaders and General Awn opposed the reform. On October 13, 1990, Syrian forces drove General Awn out of the Presidential palace and into the French embassy where he was granted political asylum. Awn's departure appeared to end the two-year stalemate, and open the way for the reform government under President Hirawi to take full control of the government of Lebanon. Hirawi, whose six-year term was extended by a constitutional amendment for an additional three years, served until 1998, when he was replaced by the Armed Forces Commander General Emile Lahoud.

Political Dynamics

Lebanon's Population. Because of political sensitivities related to power sharing among the various religious sectarian communities, no census has been taken in Lebanon since 1932, when Lebanon was under a French mandate. According to current estimates by the Central Intelligence Agency as of 2005, Lebanon's population is approximately 3.8 million, of which Muslim groups comprise 59.7% while Christian groups comprise 39%, with another 1.3% of assorted religious affiliations. A more detailed but less recent estimate

by an expert on the geography and demography of the Middle East gives the following breakdown:[1]

Table 1. Population Estimates, 1999

Sect	Number	Percent
Shi'ite Muslim	1,192,000	34%
Sunni Muslim	701,000	20%
Maronite Christian*	666,000	19%
Druze**	280,000	8%
Greek Orthodox (Christian)	210,000	6%
Armenian (Christian)***	210,000	6%
Greek Catholic (Christian)*	175,000	5%
Other	70,000	2%
Total (not exact, due to rounding)	3,506,000	100%

* Affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church but retain their own rituals
** Grouped with Muslims; regarded by some as derived from Shi'ite Islam
*** Armenians are the only sizeable ethnic minority in Lebanon; other Lebanese groups are all ethnic Arab

Sectarianism. Lebanese groups have developed political parties along religious, geographical, ethnic, ideological, foreign affiliation, or other lines. In general, Christian groups are more conservative and better organized. The leading Christian parties (all led by Maronite Christians) are the Phalange, previously led by the Jumayyil family; the National Bloc, led by the Iddi family; the National Liberal Party, led by the Shamun family; and the Maradah, led by the Franjiyah family. Leading Muslim parties are the Shi'ite Muslim Amal, the Shi'ite Hizballah, the Sunni Independent Nasirite Movement, and the Progressive Socialist Party (primarily composed of Druze). Another party, the Syrian National Socialist Party (favors union with Syria), is predominantly Muslim, although it has had some Greek Orthodox leaders. Political parties form alliances and coalitions, usually temporary and subject to shifting issues, foreign influence, and personality clashes. Many of the political parties or other groups have armed militias for protection. In 1975, an incident between Palestinians and Phalangist Christians triggered a civil war that pitted conservatives against liberals and Muslims against Christians, and opened Lebanon to foreign intervention.

In recent years, the Lebanese political community also divided between the old guard elites who practiced politics under the traditional family-led parties, and younger, modern

[1] Colbert C. Held, *Middle East Patterns*, Westview Press, 2000, p. 262. Reflecting 1999 figures, Held uses an estimated total Lebanese population of 3.506 million, to which the above percentages are applied.

reformers or dissidents who formed political blocs based more on issues and ideologies. For example, the Phalange (traditionally conservative Maronite Christian) separated into factions, one led by George Saadeh and maintaining its allegiance to the Jumayyil family in the traditional manner; another following a Jumayyil lieutenant, Samir Jaja, who broke away in a personality and power struggle to form the Lebanese Forces; and a third, the Al-Wad party of Eli Hubayqah, who broke away from Jaja. (Jaja is in prison for murder and Hubayqah was assassinated in January 2002.) Similarly, dissident leaders of Amal, the Shi'ite Muslim party, broke away to form the more radical Movement of the Deprived, and another radical faction broke away to form the Islamic Amal group. Hizballah, which started as a branch of an Iranian religious group, was associated with hostage seizures and terrorism and was involved in a two-year war with Amal vying for control of Lebanon's Shi'ite Muslims. Hizballah and Amal later resolved their differences and formed an alliance for the 1992 elections and subsequent elections.

Post Civil War Elections (1992-2005)

1992. Beginning in mid-July 1992, several Maronite leaders opined that the elections tentatively scheduled for September 1992 should be delayed until after Syria agreed to withdraw troops from Beirut. (The Taif agreement called for Lebanese-Syrian withdrawal discussions and National Assembly elections two years after the accords were ratified, which occurred on September 21, 1990.) The Maronites believed that the Syrian military presence would intimidate voters and would extend the Syrian occupation of Lebanon. Syrian officials said the elections should go on as scheduled, and that Syria would not withdraw from Beirut in the near future even if the withdrawal discussions were held. The Maronites announced an election boycott and called for general strikes on the election days. Many, but not all, Maronites running for office withdrew their names, and most Maronites stayed away from the polls. Their strategy appeared to backfire, and more pro-Syrian Deputies were elected than would have been the case if the mainstream Maronites had remained in the race. The newly elected National Assembly elected Amal leader Nabih Birri to be the Speaker of the Parliament and President Hirawi named billionaire construction tycoon Rafiq Hariri as Prime Minister. Hariri said the cabinet's first task would be restoring the economy.

1996. The Maronites did participate in the 1996 elections, despite some pro-Syrian and pro-Muslim manipulating of the voter districts. The National Assembly passed an election law on July 11, 1996, that named the five provinces as election districts, but subdivided Mount Lebanon into six sub-districts. Ten Assembly members petitioned the Constitutional Court claiming the election law violated the constitutional principle of equality among Lebanese, and the Court upheld their petition. A second law passed on August 13 was similar to the first, but stipulated that the law would apply only to the 1996 election. Members failed to acquire the necessary ten signatures on a petition to challenge the new law, and the elections were held as scheduled with Mount Lebanon as the only subdivided district. For the most part, the delegates elected in 1996 were pro-Syrian moderates. Syria did not support extremists from the left or right. Hizballah won seven seats, a drop from the nine seats it won in 1992.

2000. The 2000 elections were held on August 26 for the 63 seats representing Mount Lebanon and the north and on September 3 for the 65 seats representing Beirut, the Biqa (Bekaa) Valley, and the south. Despite their political differences, President Lahud named former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri to form a new government. Hariri's 30-man cabinet won

a vote of confidence on October 23, 2000, but frictions between Lahoud and Hariri continued.

2005 and its Aftermath. Hariri resigned in October 2004, after disagreeing with a Syrian-backed constitutional amendment to extend the pro-Syrian President Emile Lahoud's term by an additional three years, and Hariri subsequently aligned himself with an anti-Syrian opposition coalition. Hariri's assassination in a car bombing on February 14, 2005, widely blamed on Syrian agents, led to widespread protests by an anti-Syrian coalition comprising many members of the Christian, Druze, and Sunni Muslim and counter-demonstrations by pro-Syrian groups including Shi'ites who rallied behind the Hizballah and Amal parties. On April 7, as domestic and foreign outrage mounted, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1595 establishing an international independent investigation commission to be based in Lebanon and "to assist the Lebanese authorities in their investigation of all aspects of this terrorist act."

As Syrian troops departed from Lebanon (see below), the Lebanese prepared to hold parliamentary elections without Syrian interference for the first time since 1972. Three principal groupings emerged to contest the multi-phased elections: a mixed coalition of supporters of the late Prime Minister Hariri (the "Bristol Gathering"), who rallied around his son Saad Hariri; a combined electoral list led by Hizballah and Amal; and the "Change and Reform Alliance" consisting of largely Christian supporters of the long exiled former armed forces commander-in-chief General Michel Awn, who returned to Lebanon in May.[2] The first round, held on May 29 to elect candidates from Beirut, resulted in a strong showing by the anti-Syrian Bristol coalition led by Saad Hariri, which won all 19 seats contested. During the second round, held on June 5 to elect candidates from southern Lebanon, the Hizballah-Amal list won all 23 seats contested. In the third round, held on June 12 to elect candidates from central and eastern Lebanon, General Awn's list won 21 out of 58 seats, as many Christians deserted Hariri to vote for Awn. In the fourth and final round held on June 19 to elect candidates from northern Lebanon, however, Hariri's candidates (the Bristol Gathering) reversed the trend toward Awn, winning all 28 contested seats and thus gaining a majority of 72 seats in Lebanon's 128-member parliament. The other two blocs, the Hizballah-Amal Movement and the Change and Reform Alliance, won 33 and 21 seats, respectively. On June 22, in a statement by the President of the Security Council, the Council welcomed the Lebanese parliamentary elections and commended "the fair and credible character of the vote."

Despite Hariri's success, the strong showing by the Amal-Hizballah list among Shi'ite voters resulted in the reelection of veteran parliamentary speaker Nabih Berri, generally regarded as pro-Syrian. But an anti-Syrian Hariri supporter, former Finance Minister Fouad Siniora, gained parliament's endorsement for the post of prime minister and was appointed to this post by President Lahoud on June 30. On June 19, Siniora gained approval for a 24-member cabinet composed of 15 supporters of Saad Hariri's Futures Movement, five supporters of the pro-Syrian Shi'ite coalition, and others. Particularly noteworthy was the appointment for the first time in Lebanese history of a Hizballah official, Muhammad Fneish, to a cabinet position as Minister of Energy and Water Resources. The new cabinet received

[2] General Awn, a controversial former armed forces commander and prime minister, rejected the Taif Agreement and fled to the French Embassy in Beirut after being besieged by Syrian forces. He was subsequently granted political asylum in France.

a vote of confidence on July 30, gaining 92 affirmative votes from the 128-member parliament, with 14 opposed, 2 abstaining, and 20 not attending the session.

Siniora will continue to face difficulties in working with this mixed government. First, his former ally, Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, disagrees with Siniora over the status of the pro-Syrian President Lahoud: Siniora is prepared to work with Lahoud at least in the short term, while Jumblatt wants him removed because of his close ties with Syria. Second, the role of the formerly exiled General Awn is uncertain: though long an opponent of the Syrian role in Lebanon, Awn formed tactical alliances with several pro-Syrian Lebanese politicians during the recent elections in an effort to defeat pro-Hariri candidates. On the other hand, Awn's grouping is not represented in the newly formed cabinet and Awn has said he will form the backbone of an opposition to Siniora's government. Some observers believe Awn has his eye on the presidency. Third, the inclusion of a Hizballah official in the cabinet raises further potential problems; for example, the U.S. State Department, while welcoming the new cabinet, has said it will not deal with an official of Hizballah, which the U.S. Government has listed as a foreign terrorist organization. In this connection, a major stumbling block for the new government will be a U.N. demand contained in Security Council Resolution 1559 that all militias be disbanded, which in effect refers primarily to Hizballah. This will be difficult to implement in view of Hizballah's strong block of supporters in parliament and inclusion of a Hizballah official in the new cabinet..

Recent or Current Foreign Presence in Lebanon

Syria

Thirty-five thousand Syrian troops entered Lebanon in March 1976, in response to then President Suleiman Frangieh's appeal to protect the Christians from Muslim and Palestinian militias; later, Syria switched its support away from the main Christian factions. Between May 1988 and June 2001, Syrian forces occupied most of west Beirut and much of eastern and northern Lebanon. Syrian forces did not venture south of a "red line" running east and west across Lebanon near Rashayah, inasmuch as territory south of the line was considered to fall within the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) operating area.

In October 1989, as part of the Taif agreements, Syria agreed to begin discussions on possible Syrian troop redeployment from Beirut to the eastern Beqaa Valley two years after political reforms were implemented and discuss further withdrawals at that time. Then President Elias Hirawi signed the reforms in September 1990. However, the withdrawal discussions, which according to most interpretations of the Taif Agreement were to have started in September 1992, did not take place, in part because the Lebanese government said it needed more time to establish its authority over the country. Syrian officials maintained that they were waiting for the Lebanese government to complete rebuilding the army and police forces and assume security responsibilities in Lebanon before beginning the withdrawal discussions. In the meantime, Syria and Lebanon signed a treaty of brotherhood, cooperation, and coordination in May 1991, which called for creating several joint committees to coordinate policies. Although Syrian troop strength in Lebanon reportedly declined from 35,000-40,000 in the 1980s to approximately 14,000 by early 2005, Syria continued to exercise controlling influence over Lebanon's domestic politics and regional policies; moreover, its intelligence agents were active in Lebanon. U.N. Security Council

Resolution 1559 adopted on September 2, 2004 called among other things upon "all remaining foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon."

The Hariri assassination in February 2005 prompted strong international pressure on the Syrian regime, particularly from the United States and France, to withdraw its forces and intelligence apparatus from Lebanon in accordance with Resolution 1559. On April 26, the Syrian foreign minister informed U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and the President of the U.N. Security Council that Syrian forces had completed their withdrawal from Lebanon. On May 23, the U.N. Secretary General forwarded a report by a team he had sent to Lebanon to verify Syrian withdrawal. The team "found no Syrian military forces, assets or intelligence apparatus in Lebanese territory, with the exception of one Syrian battalion" deployed near the disputed village of Deir Al-Ashayr on the Lebanese-Syrian border. The team also concluded that "no Syrian military intelligence personnel remain in Lebanon in known locations or in military uniform" but added that it was "unable to conclude with certainty that all the intelligence apparatus has been withdrawn."[3]

Syria has long regarded Lebanon as part of its sphere of influence. Some international observers have expressed concern that Syrian leaders might try to circumvent the effect of the withdrawal by maintaining their influence through contacts they have acquired over the years in the Lebanese bureaucracy and security services.[4] The assassination in June 2005 of two prominent Lebanese critics of Syria – a well-known journalist and a veteran politician – have accentuated these fears. On June 10, 2005, following accusations of Syrian involvement in the murder of the journalist, U.N. Secretary General Annan announced that he was sending the verification team back to Lebanon to see if Syrian intelligence agents were still in the country.[5] Another remaining question concerns the ability of the Lebanese security forces to assume responsibility for maintaining order in areas vacated by Syrian forces. Lebanon's ground forces number approximately 70,000 organized into 11 brigades and a few separate units and armed largely with obsolescent equipment, plus minuscule air and naval forces, each consisting of about 1,000 personnel.[6]

Israel

In March 1978, Israel invaded and occupied Lebanese territory south of the Litani River, to destroy Palestinian bases that Israel believed were the source of attacks against Israelis. Israeli forces withdrew in June 1978, after the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was placed south of the Litani to serve as a buffer between Israel and the Palestinians (U.N.S.C. Resolution 425, March 19, 1978). In June 1982, Israel mounted a

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[3] Annex to U.N. Security Council document S/2005/331, Letter dated 23 May 2005 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

[4] Robin Wright, "Syria Moves to Keep Control of Lebanon," *Washington Post*, March 31, 2005. Syria also has potential built-in assets through the continued presence of President Lahoud and parliamentary speaker Berri.

[5] In a further complication, a pro-Syrian Lebanese cabinet minister, who is also a son-in-law of President Lahoud, was wounded in a car bombing on July 12. President Lahoud attributed the act to "enemies of Lebanon" but did not directly blame a specific party. Leena Saidi, and John Kifner, "Pro-Syria Official Survives Latest Lebanon Car Bombing," *New York Times*, July 13, 2005.

[6] Recent estimates appear in International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 2004-2005*, London, pp. 129-130.

more extensive invasion designed to root out armed Palestinian guerrillas from southern Lebanon, defeated Syrian forces in central Lebanon, and advanced as far north as Beirut. As many as 20,000 Palestinians and Lebanese may have perished in the fighting. Israeli forces completed a phased withdrawal in 1985, but maintained a 9-mile wide security zone in southern Lebanon from 1985 to 2000. About 1,000 members of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) patrolled the zone, backed by a 2,000-3,000 Lebanese militia called the South Lebanon Army (SLA), which was trained and equipped by Israel. On its part, Israel continued its air and artillery retaliation against Palestinian and Lebanese Shi'ite militia and Lebanese armed forces units that attacked IDF and SLA positions.

In May 2000, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak fulfilled a 1999 campaign promise to withdraw Israeli forces from the security zone in southern Lebanon. Barak had hoped to do this in conjunction with a Syrian withdrawal, but the continued stalemate in Syrian-Israeli talks led Barak to decide to move unilaterally. Some 500 Hizballah militia moved into portions of the southern security zone vacated by the IDF and SLA. Israel gave asylum to approximately 6,700 SLA fighters and their families, while another 1,500 SLA were captured by Hizballah and turned over to the Lebanese Government to stand trial. Of the 6,700 exiles, many emigrated to Australia, Canada, and Latin America; approximately 2,000 remained in Israel as of mid-2005, where they were recently granted the right to Israeli citizenship but few applied.

Syria and the pro-Syrian Lebanese government asserted that the Israeli withdrawal was incomplete because it did not include a small 10-square-mile enclave known as the Shib'a Farms near the Israeli-Lebanese-Syrian tri-border area. Most third parties maintain that the Shib'a Farms is part of the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights and is not part of the Lebanese territory from which Israeli was required to withdraw under a 1978 U.N. Security Council resolution (425). On June 16, 2000, the U.N. Secretary General informed the Security Council that Israel had withdrawn from Lebanon in compliance with Resolution 425.

Hizballah, on its part, claimed credit for forcing Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, thereby boosting its credentials within the Arab world. Since May 2000, Israeli forces in the Shib'a Farms area have been the main focus of Hizballah attacks. Some analysts believe that Syria, the Lebanese Government, and Hizballah raised the issue of this obscure enclave as a justification for continuing to put military pressure on Israel to withdraw from the Golan Heights in the aftermath of its withdrawal from Lebanon.[7] Syria denies this. It is not clear whether the new Lebanese Government, which contains both pro- and anti-Syrian elements, will maintain Lebanon's former position regarding the Shib'a Farms.

[7] Michael Slackman, "Shabaa [variant spelling] Farms at Center of Tension for Lebanon, Syria and Israel," *Los Angeles Times*, Apr. 28, 2001.

Table 2. U.S. Assistance to Lebanon

(millions of dollars)

Year	Total	Economic Aid (Grants)	Food Aid (Grants)	Military Aid (Loans)	I.M.E.T. (Grants)
1946 - 1980	332.7	120.2[a]	86.2[b]	123.3[c]	3.0
1981	24.3	4.0	0	20.0	0.3
1982	21.8	9.0	2.2	10.0	0.6
1983	153.9	52.2	0	100.0	1.7
1984	44.0	28.1	0.3	15.0	0.6
1985	21.1	19.9	0.5	0	0.7
1986	17.6	16.0	1.1	0	0.5
1987	23.0	12.8	9.7	0	0.5
1988	12.3	5.1	6.8	0	0.4
1989	15.5	2.8	12.3	0	0.4
1990	19.4	8.3	10.7	0	0.4
1991	19.2	9.3	9.9	0	0
1992	16.4	9.2	7.2	0	0
1993	14.4	10.3	3.5	0	0.6
1994	2.0	1.7	0	0	0.3
1995	16.0	15.6[d]	0	0	0.4
1996	2.5	2.0	0	0	0.5
1997	12.8	12.3	0	0	0.5
1998	12.6	12.0	0	0	0.6
1999	12.6	12.0	0	0	0.6
2000	15.6	15.0	0	0	0.6
2001	35.4	34.9	0	0	0.5
2002	35.6	35.0	0	0	0.6
2003	35.5	34.8	0	0	0.7
2004	35.9	35.2	0	0	0.7
2005	35.9	35.2	0	0	0.7
2006[e]	35.7	35.0[e]	0	0	0.7
Totals	1,023.7	587.9	150.4	268.3	17.1

I.M.E.T. = International Military Education and Training

Source: U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants

a. Of the $120.2 million total, $19 million was loans.

b. Of the $86.2 million total, $28.5 million was loans.

c. Of the $123.3 million total, $109.5 was loans and $13.8 million was grants.

d. Includes about $6 million from 1994.

e. Administration request; H.R. 3057 would raise economic aid to $40 million.